

Other Opportunities

The VPPPA: The Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) is the leading occupational safety and health organization dedicated to cooperative safety and health management systems. The VPPPA, a nonprofit, member driven association, provides networking and educational offerings, publications, mentoring, professional development and volunteer opportunities.

SGE's: Qualified volunteers from VPP sites are eligible to participate as Special Government Employees. OSHA established the SGE Program to allow industry employees to work alongside OSHA during VPP onsite evaluations. Not only does this innovative program benefit OSHA by supplementing its onsite evaluation teams, but it gives industry and government an opportunity to work together and share views and ideas. The volunteers must be approved by OSHA and funded by their companies to participate. After submitting an application and completing the required training, these volunteers are sworn in as SGE's and are approved to assist as VPP onsite evaluation team members.

INSHARP: The Indiana Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program recognizes smaller employers working toward exemplary safety and health management systems. Companies with fewer than 250 employees on-site, and no more than 500 employees nationwide, are eligible to participate in this alternative to VPP.

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"The Voluntary Protection Programs encourage and recognize safety and health excellence. VPP represents a partnership between labor, management and government which advances the safety and health culture for Hoosier workers. VPP sites are demonstrated leaders in the safety and health arena and the Indiana Department of Labor is proud to support such a commitment."



Lori Torres
Commissioner,
Indiana Department of Labor

The Indiana Voluntary Protection Programs

Created in 1982, OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs recognize and partner with businesses and worksites that show excellence in occupational safety and health. Sites are committed to effective employee protection beyond the requirements of OSHA standards. VPP Participants develop and implement systems to effectively identify, evaluate, prevent, and control occupational hazards to prevent employee injuries and illnesses. As a result, the average VPP worksite has a lost workday incidence rate at least 50% below the average of its industry. In return, OSHA removes participants from programmed inspection lists.



For more information regarding THE INDIANA VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAMS, Please contact:

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INDIANA'S VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAMS

The Programs

Scope: All fixed facilities covered by IOSHA are eligible to join the Indiana Voluntary Protection Programs. Each worksite that applies must show a commitment to effective safety and health management systems and work towards becoming an industry leader in occupational safety and health.

Although there is currently no program in place for temporary worksites, such as construction projects, IOSHA expects that such a program will be in place in the future. IOSHA currently enters into and encourages formal partnership agreements with construction companies for particular projects.

General Requirements: An effective, ongoing safety and health program. IOSHA believes an effective safety and health management system is the best way to prevent occupational illnesses and injuries. By meeting performance-based criteria, the VPP participant is expected to use a comprehensive system geared toward each worksite's needs. **Management leadership and employee participation, in addition to company self-evaluations, are key elements of this process.** Annual self-evaluations measure success and identify areas needing improvement.

Cooperation. VPP emphasizes trust and cooperation among IOSHA, the employers, employees and employee representatives. This cooperation—and the excellent protection found at VPP sites—complements the agency's enforcement activity without replacing it, allowing the agency to focus its effort on higher-risk establishments.

Although VPP sites are exempt from programmed inspections, employers and employees retain their rights and responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Good Performance. Voluntary Protection Programs participants are selected based on their written safety and health management system and ongoing performance. IOSHA also conducts a thorough on-site evaluation to judge how well the site's protective system is working, including a review of site injury/illness rates. Continuous improvement is expected.

Star: The Star Program is designed for exemplary worksites with comprehensive, successful safety and health management systems. Companies in the Star Program have achieved injury and illness rates at or below the national average of their respective industries. These sites are self-sufficient in their ability to control workplace hazards. Star participants are reevaluated every three to five years, although incident rates are reviewed annually.

Merit: Merit is a step in the positive direction towards an employer receiving Star status. Merit sites have good safety and health management systems, but these systems need some improvement to be judged excellent. Merit sites demonstrate the potential and the commitment to meet goals tailored to each site and to achieve Star quality within three years. However, each Merit site is limited to one three-year term, unless a second term is approved by the Indiana Commissioner of Labor. On-site evaluations occur every 18-24 months.

IOSHA Responsibilities

Application Review: Once your VPP application has been completed, it will be reviewed by the IOSHA VPP Manager. This review will indicate your facility's readiness for the on-site review.

On-site Review: Each applicant undergoes an audit of its safety and health programs. The multi-stepped on-site evaluation typically requires about four days, depending on the size of the facility and complexity of the operations. In addition to a review of records, logs and inspection history, the on-site review includes an initial meeting with management staff and employees, a walk-through of the facilities to determine hazards and precautions, formal and informal interviews, and a closing meeting to discuss findings and recommendations.

Evaluation: Merit sites are evaluated every 18 to 24 months and Star sites every three to five years. Injury and illness rates are compared to national averages. Merit sites must show a commitment toward gaining Star status within three years.

Inspections: Participation in VPP does not eliminate the rights or responsibilities of employers or employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. IOSHA enforcement inspections will result from valid complaints, workplace accidents or fatalities, chemical leaks and spills and other significant events.

IOSHA Expertise: Indiana's VPP Manager is available to all participating sites to provide ongoing guidance and assistance.

